



Humanitas

Medical University of South Carolina
Volume XIV
2010





Dear Readers,

Welcome to Volume XIV of *Humanitas*, the literary magazine of the Medical University of South Carolina. Founded in 1996, *Humanitas* is a discreet treasure of the Medical University, which has served as a venue for students, faculty, and staff to express themselves through the literary and visual arts.

The staff of *Humanitas* would like to start by expressing our sincerest appreciation to each and every person who took the initiative to submit to this year's edition. We also want to encourage those of you whose submissions did not make it into this year's publication to maintain your artistic drive and to please submit again in the future. Moreover, we implore our readership and the MUSC community at large to solicit their friends and those with an interest in the humanities to submit their works particularly any fiction, poetry, or prose.

Thanks are due to the MUSC Humanities Committee; the committee members' commitment to this publication and cultivating a more humanistic attitude on campus is an invaluable service to the university. One person in particular is due special commendation, Kristina Rodgers-Cishek. Without your assistance this publication would not come to fruition.

In conclusion, I bid you happy reading and do hope you enjoy the 14th edition of our magazine. The editorial board believes this year's edition to be special.

Cheers,

Joseph Kavolus





2010 Humanitas Awards For Creative Excellence

Excellence In Prose:

I Have Lived in Wisconsin

Matthew Dettmer

College of Medicine

Excellence In Poetry:

Mechanical Marionette

Emily Allen

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science

Excellence In Visual Art:

“Chuck Close Dasha”

Vasilina Kochurina

College of Pharmacy

Cover Artwork:

“Resting Hand”

Jon Donohue

Division of Rheumatology & Immunology



Humanitas Staff

Volume XIV 2010

Editor-in-Chief

Joseph Kavolus

College of Medicine

Assistant Editor

Jon Jennings

College of Medicine

Editorial Board

Sanford Zeigler

College of Medicine

Vasilina Kochurina

College of Pharmacy

Grace Lopez

College of Medicine

Ashley Parks

College of Medicine

Vivek Vasuki

College of Medicine

Laura Martin

College of Medicine

Anthony J. Meelan

College of Medicine

Theodore James

College of Medicine

Darcy Slizewski

College of Medicine

Maria Shtessel

College of Medicine

Journal Layout Editor:

Geoffrey Cormier

MUSC University Press

Faculty Advisor

Steven W. Kubalak

Cell Biology and Anatomy

Submissions Coordinator

Kristina Rodgers-Cishek

Office of Integrated Planning
and Assessment





Contents

PAGE

1. A Doctor's Helping Hand – Andre Hebra
2. *Kosmic Doctoring* – Edward Short
3. *Nov. 12* –Matthew Dettmer
4. Cage – Nancy Lemon
5. Untitled – Thierry Bacro
6. *Brick by Brick* – Notorious Teaundra Coleman
7. Chuck Close Dasha – Vasilina Kochurina
  *Prize for Excellence In Visual Art*
8. Charleston Flood – Maria Shtessel
9. Finished – Jennie Odom
10. *Confused* – Jelena Zerega
11. *Losing It* – Joseph Sistino
12. Grapes – Brittnay Lanford
13. Inanna – Lindsey Kettinger
14. *Fade From View* – Adrian Nida
15. Colorful Bird – Katie Crosby
16. Marsh – Lisa Graves
17. Untitled – Matthew Nimmich



Contents

PAGE

18. *Glimmer* – Marguerite Rodgers
19-20. *I Have Lived in Wisconsin* - Matthew Dettmer
 ❧ *Prize for Excellence In Prose*
21. *Let's Play* – Peter Tang
22. *First Out-* J Scott
23. *In Sickness and in Health* - John Korman
24. *Prayer-* Jeffrey Wong
25. *Mechanical Marionette* – Emily Allen
 ❧ *Prize for Excellence In Poetry*
26. *Joe Pass Sar* – Steven Rosenzweig
27. *Midlife Colors* – Marguerite Rodgers
28. *Charleston Nights* – Michael Fischbach
29-30. *Newspaper* - Vasilina Kochurina
31. *Charleston* – Katelyn Oates
32. *Dock* – Stacy Miers
33-35. *I'll See You in Heaven* - Athena Marie Tate
36. *Dolphin* – Logan Szubski
37. *CE Pepper* – Steve Hutchins
38. *Boy* – Katie Powers





A Doctor's Helping Hand



Andre Hebra
Department of Surgery



Kosmic Doctoring

Here I am, I've worked diligently to learn how to know, help and heal
Today has been full of excitement, monotony, and tragedy
Done for the day, I head home
I take off my skin and thoughts for a while
Recognizing pure sublime, unconditioned being
Eternity opens
Mind travelling, my attention whizzes through forever
Mentally projecting the chaotic explosions and galactic formations
The developmental trajectory of life complexifying
Life unambiguously pushing to survive and thrive
Cycles of Life Explosions and Extinctions, all part of our heritage
Life approaches another wave of Chaos
The human family semi-conscious of the Process
Pushing further into an Evolving Future based on what happens Now
Aligning with Purpose and Clear Intention
As Life, I must survive and thrive, push harder to Create
In this sense we are alike, you and I, as members of One Life
We are the organs of the Universe, seeking deeper expression
As Doctor, I strive to help you survive and thrive for the Sake of the
Process
As Kosmic Doctors, we will never stop helping and healing in a chang-
ing world.
Free and Full, I redress with skin suit and cognitive attire
Tirelessly ready for another day of excitement, monotony, and tragedy
Learn how to know, help and heal

Edward Short
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences





“Nov. 12”

A day after
Veteran’s Day,

a week after
the nation changed
forever,
he jitters on the exam
table, pressing
his thumb into the opposite
hand answering yes
ma’am, no ma’am.

The words of jokes
mumble out and
haunt the room,
empty and cheap.

He makes them
because,
like he says, he’s
lucky

because
corroding salt
rivers run over him
in the nights,
burning scars
into his cheeks

because dreams are
lifting body bags
that crumple limp
and sloshing
with the lifting

because he hides from them,
his own dreams,
weeks of bloodshot stumbling
around an empty house and
around an empty bed

because shit-storm shakes
that rock him back and
forth from doctors to
surgeons to pills and
pills and
pills
are the only friends
that call.

because food
doesn’t taste anymore,
it scours his insides
slowly,
every bite the bullet
that bled his pancreas
dry and left a
smoldering hole
that will never
be filled,
but which no one
can see.

Matt Dettmer
College of Medicine



Cage



Nancy Lemon
Harper Student Center





Untitled



Thierry Bacro
Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy



Brick by Brick

it would be nice
if i could have
stayed in your eyes
forever

your
treasure

and you can't
even imagine
how long it's taken
for me to take these feelings
and do something
anything
productive
with them
you dont even know
how hard this is
for me
to
do

it would have been nice
if we could have lasted
forever

my
treasure

and now this
brick wall
this brick wall
this big brick wall
that you have built
between you and me
because you didn't know what else
to do
i wish i could just control
you
and my emotions

i wish i could just
have more control

over this situation

i think about you like crazy

even when i hate to
even when i hate you
and even when i still love you
even when i love to
remember good pasttimes
just to past time

and those memories arrest my
mind
without warning
creep up out the past
burning all other thoughts
into ashes

making our past
outlast
even my present

i'm tired of our soul tie
because it is so draining
on my mental, my physical, my
emotional, my spiritual

I spend time talking to God
about even you
when I could be praying for any-
thing
AN.Y.THING.
else

Notorious Teaundra Coleman
College of Dental Medicine





Chuck Close Dasha



Vasilina Kochurina
College of Pharmacy

Charleston Flood

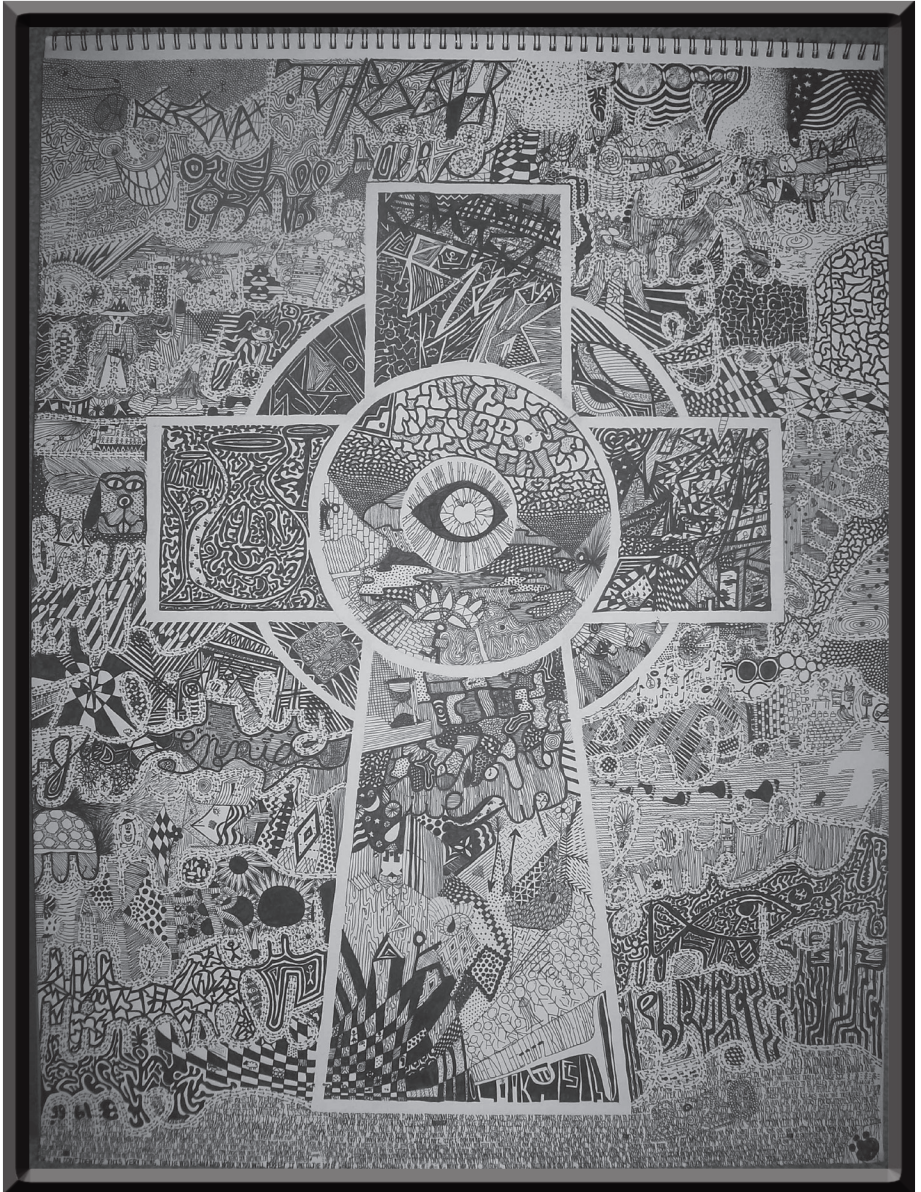


Maria Shtessel
College of Medicine





Finished



Jennie Odom
College of Dental Medicine



Confused

Street lights flicker in the night,
You walk along, wandering
Should you jump?
Someone's arms are waiting for you somewhere
You stand there, wandering,
Should you jump?
You hear his cries.
The soul that smothers you.
Every part in your body filled with him
You cry out.
Let me jump!
Arms are getting closer,
They feel your skin,
You shiver.
Love is real!
You moan,
Grasping for anything
Other than reality.
His tongue slithers down your being
Almost there.....
And you jump.

Jelena Zerega
Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology





Losing It

If I ever lose my sight
I'll remember what I see
All the colors of the rainbow
When you are close to me

I can feel the pain
Of losing the way
I see you every day

If I ever lose the sound
Of the music that I hear
That echoes through my world
Whenever you are near

I can feel the pain
Of losing the way
I hear you every day

But I can still feel your touch
And I can still love you so much

If I ever lose my voice
That tells you how I feel
I'll find another way
Until I can sing again someday

I can feel the pain
Of losing the way
I tell you every day
I love you



Grapes



Brittnay Lanford
College of Pharmacy





Inanna



Lindsey Kettinger
College of Nursing



Fade from View

This cold, harsh abyss
won't stare back at me.
No matter what I do
it refuses to see.

Screams go unheard,
drowned out by my rage.
Its ability to ignore
is worse than a cage.

Try as I might,
I won't steal its eye.
So one final thrust is left,
before the last sigh.

I decide to entertain
a shimmering thought.
I turn up a mirror,
but it focuses on naught.

Finally I realize,
what I've always known.
I exhausted myself fighting
and ended up alone.

The abyss wants me
to fade from its view.
If that is what is wanted
why should I refuse?

A ghost I'll become
hiding from sight,
until darkness surrounds me
banishing light.

Adrian Nida
Research Support Center





Colorful Bird



Katye Crosby
College of Nursing



Marsh



Lisa Graves
Department of Ophthalmology





Untitled



Matthew Nimmich
College of Dental Medicine



Glimmer

In the darkest night
A glimmer of light shines brilliant

This glimmer of hope
However small

Will hold my gaze
Capture my attention
Sharpen the present
Dull the past
Shape my future

If only
For
A
Glimmer

Marguerite Rodgers
Department of Health Professions





I have lived in Wisconsin.

And all things considered, I would say that I was fortunate to have lived in Wisconsin. Its charming residents taught me a lot about the pieces of the Midwestern dream that sustain the American heartland. I learned a lot about beer. A lot about bowling. A lot about bratwurst and Brett Favre. About meatloaf, and Meatloaf. I have learned to grow indignant when the TV tells me that happy cows come from California because everyone knows that the happiest cows live in the fields of southeastern Wisconsin. I learned that the only people who pronounce the “I” in Milwaukee are people who are not from there.

Mostly, though, I learned about the weather.

Specifically, as the reader may imagine, those weather lessons centered on the winter. The cold. The snow. Frostbite. Wisconsin’s weather is such an obstinate and oppressive force that it necessarily shapes the lives of its residents and forces them to take notice. Like hurricane season in the southeast, winter in the dairy state is a bonding experience, an entity that you have to contend with no matter who you are, what you do for a living, or what neighborhood you live in.

Let’s be perfectly clear. I am not in the least nostalgic for walking outside into negative thirty degrees Fahrenheit and wind that stabs every exposed surface like it had an axe to grind with your pores. I do not miss that feeling.

But winter has moments of absolute and resolute beauty. Clear bright mornings when the sun coats the frosted sheets of snow with a sheen of twinkling light. Nights when the swirl of snowflakes drift across you like algae in the deepest ocean and float up to streetlights forming cones of movement that dot up and down the sidewalk. Afternoons of trudging through caked-in parking lots when your feet sink a foot into the white, like bites into astronaut ice cream.

I go back to Wisconsin every winter because I am addicted to Marquette basketball and basketball happens to be played in the winter. I go back because my friends come back too, and for forty-



eight to seventy-two hours we can be nineteen again. I go back because my teachers and mentors are there and they continue to teach and mentor. I don't go back because I enjoy freezing my ass off.

But every time I go back I try to steal away for a few minutes and smell the cold as it seeps in and deadens my nostrils and feel snow flakes flutter and land on my face, perishing.

I guess I kinda miss Wisconsin.

Matt Dettmer
College of Dental Medicine





Let's Play



Peter Tang
Harper Student Center



J Scott
Anesthesia & Perioperative Medicine





In Sickness And In Health

when told that his lymphoma was back
his spine stiffened, brow furrowed deeply
in objection; he turned to face her
seeking, grasping, finding nothing but
anger, he clung to that poor solace
frustration clouded his demeanor

defiance brimming in his eyes

then his soul burst like a summer squall
pouring memories of their lifetime
together, his wife of many years
informed of her own fate days before
Parkinson's disease; she was stoic
but his thoughts were submerged in the past

tears brimming in his eyes

reminiscence quickened to resolve
"We're going on a long vacation"
she meekly protested, "We can't go"
then stared blankly at the bare, grey walls
his eyes twinkling, he whispered gently
"We are going, very soon--you'll see"

love brimming in his eyes

John B. Korman
College of Medicine



Prayer



Jeffrey Wong
College of Medicine Dean's Office





Mechanical Marionette

An electrical pulse
Triggered by a pivotal prerogative
Mobilizes through a predestined path
Cracking along like a flash freeze
Spanning a precipitous break
In a slice of a nanosecond
Fugacious as a sailor's green flash

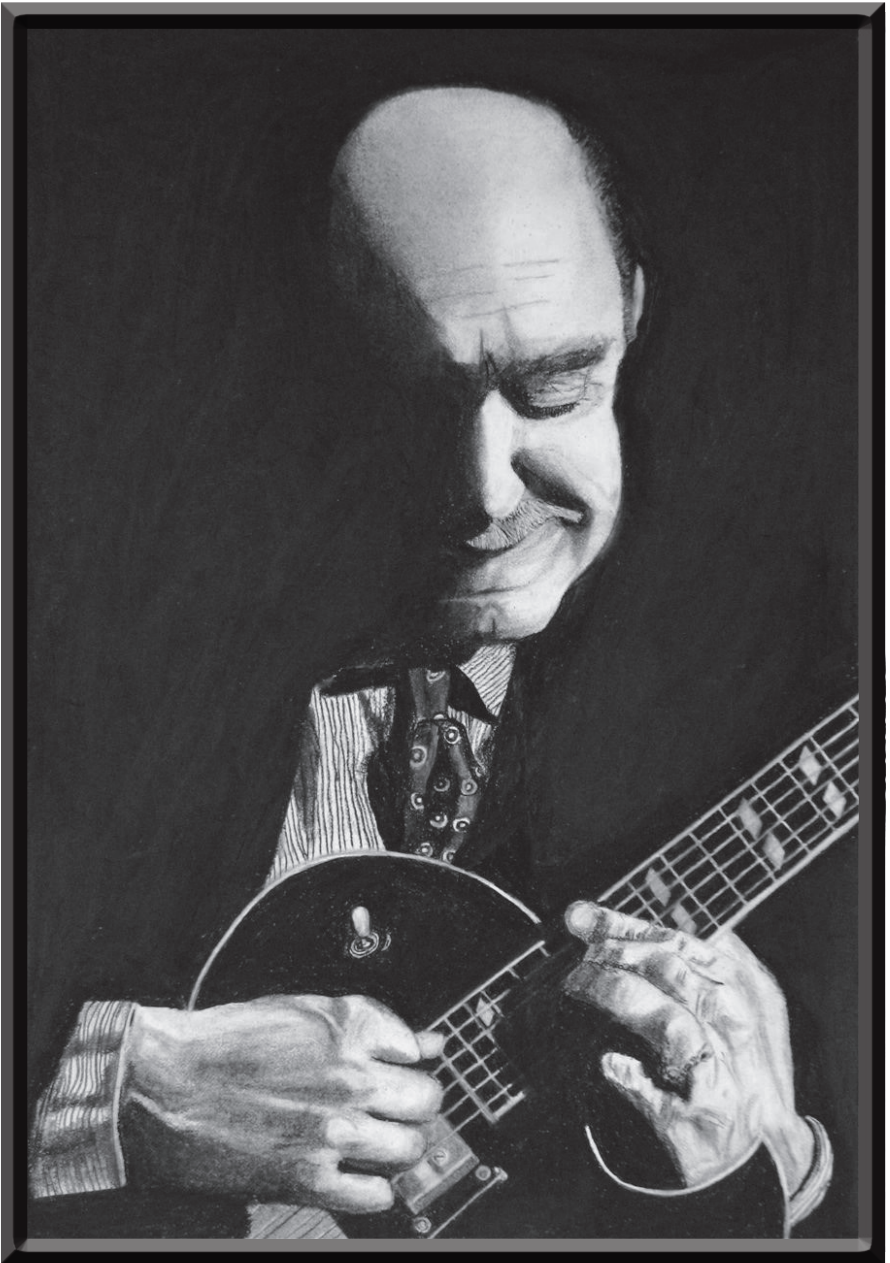
The urgency is caught
A manifest message is transmitted
Through a tendril
Enfettered in a white sheath
Crystallizing through
with the precision of Lasik
Parroted by a telephone wire

Urgently sparking through
In a cascade of evanescent checkpoints
Tiered messengers fly faultlessly
With no cognizance of an terminus
and the orientation of a mobius
until now.
A finger curls.

Emily Allen
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences



Joe Pass Sar



Steven Rosenzweig
Department of Pharmacology





Mid-Life Colors

My world
stuck
wedged fast
between old and new

The old – pushing
The new – pulling
Vision-clouded
Sight – clear

One life finished
Will another come?

When purpose becomes accomplishment
Goals set become goals achieved
Do you lose the color they brought to your life?

If vibrancy is in the struggle – do you become less vibrant
Less visible?

Can you see me?
I feel invisible to you
Even now
Even as our eyes meet.

Can you see this dilemma?

The whole of Life – an exquisite palate of
Joy, pain, darkness, light
Each bringing their own color to existence,
Coloring my world – through the push
In the pull
The rhythm of life – painting a rainbow
My rainbow
My symbol of hope
Filled with
Midlife colors – bridging together the old and the new

Marguerite Rodgers

Department of Health Professions



Michael Fischbach
Harper Student Center





Newspaper

He was reading his morning newspaper, sipping his black coffee and enjoying life when he heard his wife in the other room. She was happily twittering something to a friend of hers over the phone, but the man caught a single word in that unintelligible high-pitched flow. War. Immediately, his coffee turned bitter and his newspaper—boring.

So the war turned into something you could discuss over the phone. Something you could pleasantly talk about over a cup of tea, and then switch to crocheting or car racing. People began to forget. The subject has now faded into the conversations around the country, it seemed. The man noticed that women (and his wife, his wife!) talked about it. Old men and teenagers discussed it. Children were probably the only ones not saying anything on the topic, but in every playground there was sure to be a mock war played out. And of course, no one wanted to be the green, but everyone had to be red. And those chosen to be green, deserted so that they too, could be on the side of the good guys.

And only men, those drinking black coffee and reading newspapers, were completely silent about the war. They have seen it. There was no need to say more about it. Rather, there was the need to keep silent about the war. No one wanted to know that Eurasia withdrew, as opposed to gloriously winning. The men that came back were supposed to be heroes, not cowards, but the falsified news did not make them feel any more heroic.

“When he came back, I was so happy, I cried and cried,” he heard from another room. Involuntarily, his hands became fists, crumpling the newspaper. When they came back.. Indeed, what a day it was. The cheering crowds, seas of flowers laid out just for them. And as they passed through the streets, he wanted to cry out: “Do you know what we won? Do you know what we wasted our lives for? Do you?” But he was told to smile and wave, and so he did, faking a smile and calming the trembling hands. When he saw his wife in the crowd, and came to embrace her, tears were in his eyes. She didn’t ask, but he told her that he was crying because he was happy. She believed it, as she was supposed to.

The twittering in the other room was now replaced with the



angry clucking of a mother hen. “How dare...green spies...our boys?” was all he heard, and scoffed, staring at the crumpled sheet of dirty newsprint in his hand. That was also something everyone talked about. The other ones. Did you hear Rosenberg has taken over Oceania? Do you know that he’s setting up a totalitarian regime? They say people there now are just like slaves, but don’t know it. Fitting conversation for a Saturday morning as you lay in bed and stare at the white ceiling. Think that you’re perfect long enough, and you start to believe it. Still, no one ever asked about the Eurasia business. When were the next elections? Why are the generals running the show, if the war has ended? Where do people disappear to?... No one asked, because the answer would invariably be the same: it’s the Oceanians, it’s the greens. They did it. All you had to do was point a finger elsewhere, and people would buy it. It’s easier to believe in an outside evil, than it is to accept the inside corruption.

But the man, and other men who were just like him, they knew. They stood on the same battlefields as the evil greens did, they shot them, and they bled just like ordinary human beings. They begged for mercy just like anyone, and they held on to their morals just as strongly as the red Party members did. Hell, they were even the same morals. The only thing that mattered, was the color assigned to them by someone above. God? Hardly.

His wife was on the topic of war still, repeating something she picked up from her mother “The war has made this country a better place”. The man laid aside the ruined newspapers, set down his cold coffee, and walked over to the other room. He yanked the phone out of her hands and slammed it down on the receiver. And as she stared up at him in horror, he simply said:

“Do we need anything from the store? I’m going out to get a fresh paper.”





Charleston



Katelyn Oates
College of Pharmacy



Stacy Miers
Department of Surgery





I'll See You in Heaven...

I think it was Shannon who first told me the phrase I would hear countless times over the next three weeks and the story that went along with it, and I believe it was her because I knew it was funny the first time I heard it even when it made me want to cry, and only Shannon can do that with such frequent skill.

She told us, both me and our youngest sister, Natalia, on the car ride home from the hospital where I had just left our mother with our grandmother to spend the night in the emergency department. My grandmother, my Nanny, had become seriously dehydrated from a diarrheal infection earlier that week, and when her primary care physician saw her that morning and drew blood, she had called immediately for the ambulance because Nanny's kidneys were in acute failure. It had been the same day I drove home for Christmas break that I had received the call from my mother informing me of this family crisis.

Sitting in the front passenger seat, still wearing her work clothes from her shift earlier that day, Shannon related the story she had heard from our mother that afternoon in the emergency room of Nanny's departure from her home. Nanny, Shannon said, had been cheerful that morning to go to the doctor, more animated than she had been for the past three days, and she had not fought my uncle, her caretaker now, as she dressed and got her purse. But as she walked towards the back door with my mother to leave, she turned around to look at my grandfather, my Poppy, to look at her husband, and said, "Well, aren't you going to say goodbye?"

But Poppy just sat there staring at nothing and not saying a word. At this point he had been slowly dying for over a year, failing from that aneurism growing behind his heart for over two, and he had spells like this where his body would be awake but his mind caught in some kind of void. And that, as Nanny left, was where it was.

"This may be the last time we see each other, Edmond," Nanny told him briskly. After again no reply (I imagine she must have shrugged and made some kind of irritated, rude noise when this happened, because that is just what Nanny did when annoyed) she continued, "Well, I'll see you in heaven," (and here Shannon paused because she has got comedic timing down to an art form and knows how to break your



heart with laughter), “or not.” And then Nanny turned and promptly left with my mother.

Natalia and I laughed because it was, perhaps, the only thing we could do. Because it was funny. Because it was very, very Nanny even if our Poppy was no longer our Poppy.

The next time I heard it the story was not as funny, and each time it was recited the laughter in my heart grew hollower and hollower. Nanny would still laugh, though, if one of us said it the right way. With advancing dementia, she was to the point where she would forget her husband had been very ill, would forget that he’d spent every day all day in the house with her for the last four years, would forget even where she was, and would ask when he was getting off work to come see her. The day she was released to a nursing home for physical therapy was the day Poppy went to hospice. And on Christmas, when we took Nanny back to our house for the holiday, it was my mother who had to tell her again and again, more times than I had ever heard that silly, prescient little story, that Poppy had passed away that morning.

Four days later was the wake, and I sat next to my Nanny as a deacon said the rosary, said some fine and fitting and ultimately unmemorable words about my Poppy and heaven and those of us left behind, and I watched this woman that I loved so dearly shake and shake but barely cry. There were family and friends there behind us, and neighbors, and old members of the Irish club, and people I hardly knew, and I think about a hundred came, but it could have been closer to fifty or two hundred for all the attention I gave. And in between the visitors who paid their respects, between me on one side and my cousin, Nathan, on the other, Nanny asked what she had last said to Poppy. With a strength I must have gotten from her shaking hands I told the story without a wobble of my voice.

Nanny, after sitting wordlessly through it, made that strange tiny noise I’d only heard once or twice before, when she was so upset she wanted to bawl but had too many important things to do to cry. She looked to the coffin, narrowed her eyes at my Poppy’s profile, and muttered so quietly that I doubt even Nathan heard, “When I get to hell, I’ll kick his ass.”





My expression then, I think, was wide-eyed incredulity, because Nanny chuckled. Almost immediately afterwards she complained about her back, so we got up and walked around and eventually ended up near the photos my family had displayed that must have been close to fifty years old because Poppy had hair. Standing next to Nanny, I watched her point to one of the photos in which she wore what could only be called a bonnet and listened to her tell stories that I had never even heard before, and I wondered if this was perhaps one of the blessings of dementia, that she would be able to remember all the good old parts and never the bad new ones.

I returned her to the nursing home that night, I helped her change and tucked her into bed with a smile, and I knew as I left that I would be lucky if she spends the next Christmas with me. But I also knew as I held her hand during the funeral, as I visited at the nursing home, and as I said goodbye at the end of Christmas break, that even if I'm back home within the year to bury another of my beloved grandparents, Nanny will, even in the fiery depths of hell or wherever he goes, be so damn happy as she wallops Poppy for leaving her behind.

-assembled from the personal journals of A.M.T.

Athena Marie Tate
College of Pharmacy



Logan Szubski
College of Pharmacy





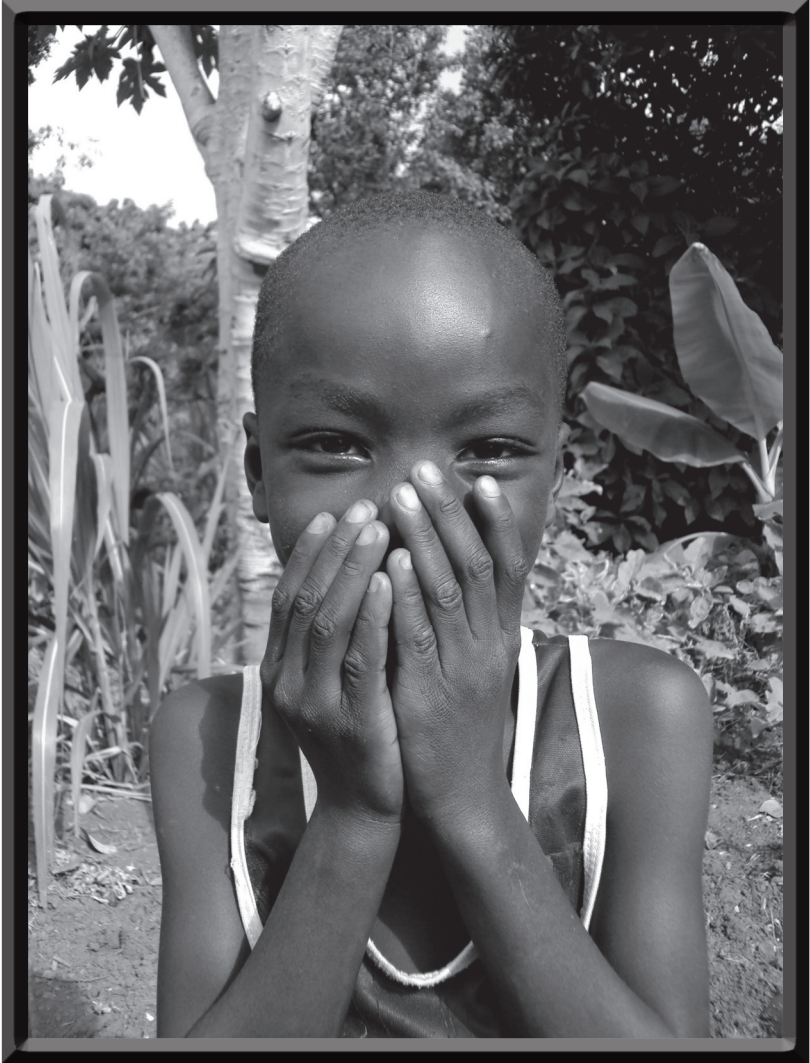
CE Pepper



Steve Hutchins
College of Dental Medicine



Boy



Katie Powers
College of Medicine



Humanitas

Medical University of South Carolina
Volume XIV
2010

